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(as of December 8, 2015)
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Garden of Grace Provides Flood Recovery Assistance

Garden of Grace United Church of Christ in Columbia, SC, assisted a dozen households with more than two-dozen residents with financial and labor help from October's historic flood to the end of 2015. Gardeners of Grace also assisted directly with recovery of a Forest Acres, SC, elementary school.

Church people also gathered and distributed supplies to evacuation shelters. The Rev. Andy Sidden, pastor, served on a steering committee, which formed a 50 agency long-term recovery group for Richland and Lexington counties where more than 22,000 households suffered flood damage. He continues to serve on the recovery group.

Garden of Grace has helped coordinate much-welcomed assistance from the UCC Southeast Conference, UCC Disaster Resources, Disaster Recovery Support Initiative (made up of the UCC, Disciples of Christ, and Church of the Brethren), and individuals churches in the Carolinas, Tennessee, West Virginia, and Connecticut.

In the new year, Garden of Grace will work to repair damage to the ceiling of its own celebration center.

Rev. Sidden Receives Copy of President's Eulogy

In addition, on the six-month observance of the Mother Emanuel AME massacre in Charleston, SC, the Rev. Andy Sidden, pastor of Garden of Grace United Church of Christ, received in December from the White House a commemorative copy of President Obama's June eulogy for the Rev. and Sen. Clementa Pinckney.

The gift came with a letter of gratitude from President Obama thanking Pastor Andy personally for an e-mail of support, prayers, and comfort sent to the President, family, and administration after the shootings.

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